

A SHORT HISTORY OF

THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

M.A. THESIS

BY

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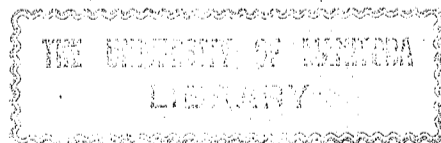
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LIST OF CHIEF AUTHORITIES CONSULTED.

History of North West Coast	-	Hubert Bancroft
History of British Columbia	-	Alexander Begg
History of the Northern Interior of B.C.	-	A.G. Morice
History of Oregon	-	Robert Greenhow
History of the Hudson Bay Company	-	Doctor Bryce
Publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition	-	Franz Boaz
Tales from the Totems of the Hidery	-	James Deans
Life of Sir James Douglas	-	Coats and Goshell
Year Book of British Columbia 1911.	-	R.E. Goshell



P R E F A C E.

In treating such a large subject as a History of British Columbia within the limits required by an Essay it is obvious that many points of importance must be overlooked. I have endeavored to treat my subject in such a way that the reader can, in a measure, grasp the main outstanding features that have marked the process of development within the Province from the date of discovery up to the present time. I have divided the treatise into four distinct periods, viz., Period of Discovery, Hudson Bay Period, Colonial Period and Confederation Period.

In the first chapter most of my material is taken from Hubert Bancroft's "History of the North West Coast". The account of Simon Fraser's expedition is taken from Dr. Bryce's "History of the Hudson Bay Company", while the reference in the last part of the Chapter pertaining to the international boundary question is taken chiefly from Robert Greenhow's "History of Oregon". In the Hudson Bay Period my chief authorities used are "History of British Columbia" by Alexander Begg, and "Life of Sir James Douglas" by Coats and Gosnell. The last part of this chapter relates to the Indians, and the authorities for that part are quoted in the body of the Essay. The third period is taken chiefly from "Life of Sir James Douglas" by Coats and Gosnell, and "History of British Columbia" by Alexander Begg. In the last period my chief authority on matters pertaining to the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway is the "Life of Sir James Douglas", while the last part treating of the industrial development is taken almost wholly from the Year Book of B.C.—1911 by R.E. Gosnell. I have throughout tried to avoid matters of a controversial character, and much of the subject matter is common to several of the authorities consulted.

PERIOD OF DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION.

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While the history of the Atlantic Coast of Canada dates back over 400 years to the days of Cabot it was not until less than a century and a half ago that anything was known of the most western part of the Dominion now included in the Province of British Columbia. For many years after the discovery by Columbus; while Cartier, Balboa, Frobisher, Hudson, Drake and a hundred other adventurous navigators were endeavoring to find a short sea passage between the Atlantic and Pacific; while the Spaniards were founding an empire in the south, and France and England were waging wars to determine the destinies of other empires in the north, the sea washed shores of the Great North West were enshrouded in a fog of mystery. Conjecture was rife in regard to the extent of the New World westwards and many were the false tales told of the discovery of the great Anian Strait and of the wonderful riches that were to be found on the adjacent shores, but although mariners' charts showed with varying degrees of accuracy the general trend of the Atlantic Coast, the outlining of the Pacific and Arctic shorelines was, until the latter part of the 18th. Century, left to conjecture and fancy. As was aptly described by an eminent divine in those days the New World was " bounded on the east by the Atlantic Ocean, on the West by the setting sun, on the north by the Aurora borealis and on the south by the day of judgment. "

The honor of discovery of the North West Coast rightfully belongs to the Spaniards, though it will be seen later why the glory was chiefly credited to the English. In the year 1773 Juan Perez was sent from Santiago by the Government of Spain on a voyage of exploration to the North Pacific seas. His instructions were to touch land as far north as 60°, thence to follow the coast southwards noting everything of interest. Possession of strategic points was to be taken in the name of the king. Any foreign establishments were to be left alone but carefully examined and reported. Perez did not succeed in getting farther north than the Queen Charlotte Islands, the western coast line of which he examined as well as fog and rainy weather would permit. Although he did not land anywhere on these islands he held considerable intercourse with the natives who came out in canoes to meet him singing and scattering feathers on the water in token of peace. They offered furs, dried fish, etc., in exchange for tools and weapons made of metal, but they cared little for tinsel or cheap trinkets. They already were in possession of some articles of iron and copper.

Leaving Queen Charlotte Islands Perez headed southwards and next touched land at what is now known as Nootka Sound. A short stay was made here and some trading was carried on with the Indians who also were friendly as those farther north. These, too, had some articles made of metal and for such articles they would pay the highest prices.

Proceeding southwards again land was kept in sight for seven days until Latitude 44°, off Cape Blanco, was reached. Thus, although Juan Perez in this trip

did not succeed in carrying out his instructions in a satisfactory manner, inasmuch as he did not reach as far north as 60°, nor discovered any good ports, nor landed to take possession of any point for Spain, nor found any foreign establishments nor proved the non existence of any; yet to him is due the honor of having practically discovered the whole North West Coast, and he gave to Spain whatever credit and claim may be founded on the mere act of discovery. It was twenty five years later before any account of this voyage was given to the world.

In the next year, 1775, a second expedition from Spain, consisting of two vessels, the "Santiago" and a smaller boat the "Sonora", was fitted out. Captains Heceta and Quadra were placed in command and given similar instructions to those of Perez the year before except that they were to endeavor to reach latitude 65° instead of 60°. They first touched land at what is now Point Grenville in the State of Washington, and here with due ceremony and in the presence of a few natives they took formal possession of the land in the name of the King of Spain. Shortly after resuming the voyage the vessels became separated. Heceta in the "Santiago" reached Nootka Sound but then turned southwards again. On his return he noted the entrance to either Clayoquot or Barclay Sound but missed the more important Strait of Juan de Fuca. Farther south he discovered the mouth of the great Columbia River but on account of the reduced condition of his crew he made no attempt at exploration. Captain Quadra, in the little boat "Sonora", only 36 feet in length, bravely endured many hardships but succeeded in gaining much valuable information relative to the newly discovered country.

He first touched land as far north as latitude 57° in the region later known as Sitka, where he saw and named Mt. Jacinto, now Mt. Edgecombe. He proceeded still farther north to latitude 58° and then made a careful survey southwards to the point reached by Perez the previous year. At two points formal possession of the land was taken in the name of the King. As he proceeded southwards he kept the land more or less in view as far as latitude 47° in the State of Washington.

Thus we see in these two years the whole of the North West coast was taken possession of for Spain by Perez, Heceta and Quadra, but by a mistaken policy on the part of the Spanish Government in not publishing the results of these expeditions much of the honor due to these venturesome navigators was lost to them.

Three years later, 1778, Captain James Cook from England, in command of the ship "Resolution" accompanied by Captain Clerke in the "Discovery" made important discoveries in determining the position and extent of the north west coast of America. The mission of the expedition was to find, if possible, a water passage to Europe either by way of the Northern Sea, recently discovered by Herne, or by some hitherto unknown passage to Hudson Bay. This search was to include a general exploration of the north west coast, commencing at latitude 45° but a more intimate survey north of latitude 65°. Instructions were also given to take formal possession, with the consent of the natives, of important points not already discovered by any other European power, and to distribute among the inhabitants such things as would be likely to remain as evidence of their having been there.

Land was sighted at Cape Flattery though Cook was uncertain whether it was part of the mainland or an island. Continuing northwards he touched land at Nootka Sound, having, like the Spaniards a few years before, missed the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The Indians at Nootka did not show surprise at the sight of Cook's ships but they were, however, astonished at the power of his fire arms, and Cook therefore concluded, though wrongly, that the Spaniards had not been there before. Cook remained in the vicinity of Nootka Sound about a month holding friendly intercourse with the natives who were eager to trade, although he does not seem to have taken possession in the name of Great Britain.

Cruising northwards stormy weather compelled the navigator to bear away well off the coast and land was not touched again until Kaye's Island in latitude 60° was reached, where Cook landed and took possession. Before the close of the season the discoverer reached a point above latitude 70° where he saw in front of him a great expanse of ice covered with innumerable walruses. Further attempts to find a passage to the Atlantic were abandoned and he crossed over to the Asiatic Coast having completed his mission and proven that whatever passage there might be must lie north of latitude 72° .

The results of this voyage were immediately published in detail and given to the world and thus was won for Cook and England the honor of discovery and of naming the region explored. Not the least important result of Cook's expedition was the establishment of the great fur trade in the north west country which became the chief incentive of all later English and American expeditions to these regions.

The first of these expeditions was fitted out in 1785 by British capital although Captain Hanna, who was in command, probably sailed under Portugese colors. A large number of sea otter skins were procured in the vicinity of Sea Otter Harbor, near the north end of Vancouver Island, and these skins were sold at fabulous prices.

In the next year, 1786, a company of Bombay merchants fitted out two trading vessels, and these, under the supervision of James Strange, proceeded to Nootka Sound where they obtained 600 of the valuable sea otter skins. Cape Scott, the north west point of Vancouver Island, was named after David Scott, the chief stock owner in the Company.

In the next year, 1787, an association of English merchants under the name of the King George's Sound Company sent Captains Portlock and Dixon in the ships "King George" and "Queen Charlotte" on a fur trading expedition. These traders parted company in the north, Portlock remaining in Alaskan waters and Dixon proceeding southwards to the Queen Charlotte Islands. Here Dixon carried on an extremely profitable trade with the Indians and secured a large supply of furs. He rounded Cape James, the southern extremity of the islands and sailed far enough up the strait to satisfy himself that the land he had been coasting along for a month was a group of islands. He applied the names "Queen Charlotte Islands" and "Dixon Strait". As a result of this expedition Portlock and Dixon sold in China 2500 skins for over \$50,000.

So great was their faith in the profitableness of the fur trade in this new country that this company sent out in the same year a second expedition under the command

of Captains Duncan and Colnett. Nootka Sound was the point of destination, but from here the sailors sailed to the Queen Charlotte Islands. Captain Duncan sailed completely through the strait between the islands and the mainland and thus was the first to prove the correctness of Dixon's earlier conjecture. Duncan also discovered and named after his vessel the Princess Royal Islands. We have not full information respecting this expedition but it seems that it was commercially a success. Two years later Captain Duncan got into trouble with the Spaniards at Nootka Sound but the details of these adventures will be given in a subsequent paragraph.

Another important fur trading expedition of this year, 1787, was that under Captain Barclay who sailed from the Belgian Port of Ostend. After securing 800 sea otter skins at Nootka Barclay sailed southwards exploring and also collecting more furs. He discovered Barclay Sound and farther down the great Strait of Fuca for which the earlier navigators sought in vain. On this trip Mrs. Barclay accompanied her husband and was perhaps the first European lady to visit these regions.

The history of the North West territory for the year 1788 is chiefly a record of the doings of the Englishmen Mears and Douglas and the Americans Kendrick and Gray. The former represented a company of English merchants in India and commanded the vessels "Felice" and "Iphegenia". Douglas in the "Iphegenia" had instructions to go first to Alaska and then follow the coast southwards. Captain Mears in the "Felice" reached Nootka in the early spring. He immediately made preparations to construct a small vessel and as a preliminary step he built a house for the workmen and stores. Work in this first shipbuilding yard on the

North West Coast proceeded favorably and in a few weeks Mears, leaving a force of men at work on the schooner sailed southwards on an exploring and trading tour. He spent two weeks at Clayoquot Sound where he was lavishly entertained by the Indian Chief, Wicananish. Continuing on his journey he sighted the great inlet which he named Juan de Fuca after its supposed original discoverer. He proceeded still farther south in search of the mouth of the Columbia River, but being disappointed he returned to Barclay Sound, the southern headland of which he named Cape Beale. While collecting furs in this region he despatched Mr. Duffin in a smaller boat to explore the Strait of Fuca. In Mear's report we are told that this boat #sailed nearly 30 leagues up the strait, and at that distance from the sea it was about 15 leagues broad, with a clear horizon stretching to the east for 15 leagues more.--- such an extraordinary circumstance filled us with strange conjectures as to the extremity of this strait, which we concluded at all events could not be any great distance from Hudson's Bay. " This description of the strait we now know of course to be far from accurate and the reference to Hudson's Bay shows how great was the ignorance at this date of the actual extent of the American continent. Mears returned to Nootka toward the latter part of the summer and as he had a good collection of furs made ready to sail for home. The schooner, "North West America" which his men had completed was launched amid much rejoicing and Captain Douglas, who had arrived from the north fitted her up for a trip to the Sandwich Islands where he intended to winter.

History of the North West Coast - Bancroft.

And now we record the appearance for the first time of the flag of the United States in these waters. The first American fur trading expedition to the Northern Pacific was financed by a company of Boston merchants. Captain John Kendrick was chosen to command the ship "Columbia", accompanied by Captain Robert Gray in the sloop "Lady Washington". They arrived at Nootka Sound in September, shortly before the departure from that port of Mears and Douglas. As the Americans were eager to get rid of their rivals in trade they gladly rendered them every assistance in their preparations for departure. The winter passed without any important incidents at Nootka, Kendrick and Gray remaining until spring collecting furs from the natives.

The year 1789 was an eventful one in the history of Vancouver Island for it was at this time that complications arose between England and Spain which developed into an international struggle for possession of the North West Coast. News, brought from Alaska the year before concerning the apparent intentions of the English and the Russians, caused the Spanish authorities to make all possible haste to forestall any foreign power in the occupation of Nootka, and accordingly in the spring, Martinez and Haro were despatched to take possession of this important point. Their instructions were to make preparations for the establishment of a colony, to erect buildings and fortifications and to secure the friendliness of the natives, for the conversion of whom friars were sent out. Foreign vessels were to be treated with due courtesy but always with a manifestation of the right of Spain to the possession of Nootka by right of discovery.

Upon the arrival of the Spanish squadron at Nootka, May 6th., Martinez found the ship "Iphigenia",